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General Assembly

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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Draft resolution submitted by the Chair

Question of Bermuda

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of Bermuda,

Having examined the relevant chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples for 2016, related to Bermuda,[1]

Taking note of the working paper prepared by the Secretariat on Bermuda[2] and other relevant information,

Recognizing that all available options for self-determination of the Territory are valid as long as they are in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the people of Bermuda and in conformity with the clearly defined principles contained in General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960 and other resolutions of the Assembly,

Expressing concern that 56 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,[3] there still remain 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, including Bermuda,

Conscious of the importance of continuing the effective implementation of the Declaration, taking into account the target set by the United Nations to eradicate colonialism by 2020 and the plans of action for the Second[4] and the Third International Decades for the Eradication of Colonialism,

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 23* (A/71/23), chap. X.
[2] A/AC.109/2016/3.
[3] Resolution 1514 (XV).
[4] A/56/61, annex.

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Recognizing that the specific characteristics and the aspirations of the people of Bermuda require flexible, practical and innovative approaches to the options for self-determination, without any prejudice to territorial size, geographical location, size of population or natural resources,

Convinced that the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Territory should continue to guide the development of their future political status and that referendums, free and fair elections and other forms of popular consultation play an important role in ascertaining the wishes and aspirations of the people,

Concerned by the use and exploitation of the natural resources of the Non-Self Governing Territories by the administering Powers for their benefit, by the use of the Territories as tax havens to the detriment of the world economy and by the consequences of any economic activities of the administering Powers that are contrary to the interests of the people of the Territories, as well as to resolution 1514 (XV),

Convinced that any negotiations to determine the status of the Territory must take place with the active involvement and participation of the people of the Territory, under the auspices of the United Nations, on a case-by-case basis, and that the views of the people of Bermuda in respect of their right to self-determination should be ascertained,

Noting the continued cooperation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories at the local and regional levels, including participation in the work of regional organizations,

Mindful that, in order for the Special Committee to enhance its understanding of the political status of the people of Bermuda and to fulfil its mandate effectively, it is important for it to be apprised by the administering Power and to receive information from other appropriate sources, including the representatives of the Territory, concerning the wishes and aspirations of the people of the Territory,

Aware of the importance both to Bermuda and to the Special Committee of the participation of elected and appointed representatives of Bermuda in the work of the Committee,

Recognizing the need for the Special Committee to ensure that the appropriate bodies of the United Nations actively pursue a public awareness campaign aimed at assisting the people of Bermuda with their inalienable right to self-determination and in gaining a better understanding of the options for self-determination, on a case-by-case basis,

Mindful, in that connection, that the holding of regional seminars in the Caribbean and Pacific regions and at Headquarters, with the active participation of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, provides a helpful means for the Special Committee to fulfil its mandate and that the regional nature of the seminars, which alternate between the Caribbean and the Pacific, is a crucial element in the context of a United Nations programme for ascertaining the political status of the Territories,

Welcoming the Pacific regional seminar held by the Special Committee in Managua and hosted by the Government of Nicaragua from 31 May to 2 June 2016 as a significant and forward-looking event, which enabled the participants to assess the progress made in the decolonization process and to review the existing working methods of the Committee and renew its momentum in implementing its historic task,

Recognizing the importance of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the seminar, which are annexed to the report of the Special Committee[5] and which outline the findings of the seminar, including, especially, the way forward for the decolonization process within the context of the proclamation by the General Assembly of the period 2011-2020 as the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism,[6]

Noting with appreciation the contribution to the development of some Territories by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Food Programme, as well as regional institutions such as the Caribbean Development Bank, the Caribbean Community, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the Pacific Islands Forum and the agencies of the Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific,

Recalling the statement made by the representative of Bermuda at the Pacific regional seminar held in Quito from 30 May to 1 June 2012,

Conscious of the different viewpoints of the political parties on the future status of the Territory, and noting the results of successive surveys by local media, according to which a majority of respondents did not wish to sever ties with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the administering Power, and a minority was in favour of independence,

Recalling the dispatch of the United Nations special mission to Bermuda in 2005, at the request of the territorial Government and with the concurrence of the administering Power, which provided information to the people of the Territory on the role of the United Nations in the process of self-determination, on the legitimate political status options as clearly defined in General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and on the experiences of other small States that have achieved a full measure of self-government,

Noting serious concerns regarding good governance, transparency and accountability in the Territory, including with respect to external election campaign financing originating in a neighbouring country, which led the Premier to resign in May 2014 with a view to maintaining integrity and confidence in the political landscape,

Cognizant of the potential usefulness of regional ties for the development of a small island Territory,

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the people of Bermuda to self-determination, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations and with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

2. *Also reaffirms* that, in the process of decolonization of Bermuda, there is no alternative to the principle of self-determination, which is also a fundamental human right, as recognized under the relevant human rights conventions;

[5] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 23* (A/71/23).
[6] See resolution 65/119.

3. *Further reaffirms* that it is ultimately for the people of Bermuda to determine freely their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter, the Declaration and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and in that connection calls upon the administering Power, in cooperation with the territorial Government and appropriate bodies of the United Nations system, to develop political education programmes for the Territory in order to foster an awareness among the people of their right to self-determination in conformity with the legitimate political status options, based on the principles clearly defined in Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) and other relevant resolutions and decisions;

4. *Stresses* the importance of the 2005 report of the Bermuda Independence Commission, which provides a thorough examination of the facts surrounding independence, and continues to regret that the plans for public meetings and the presentation of a Green Paper to the House of Assembly followed by a White Paper outlining the policy proposals for an independent Bermuda have so far not materialized;

5. *Underlines* the need further to strengthen good governance, transparency and accountability in government for the benefit of the Territory;

6. *Requests* the administering Power to assist the Territory by facilitating its work concerning public educational outreach efforts, consistent with Article 73 *b* of the Charter, and in that regard calls upon the relevant United Nations organizations to provide assistance to the Territory, if requested;

7. *Welcomes* the active participation of Bermuda in the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;

8. *Stresses* the importance of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples being apprised of the views and wishes of the people of Bermuda and enhancing its understanding of their conditions, including the nature and scope of the existing political and constitutional arrangements between Bermuda and the administering Power;

9. *Calls upon* the administering Power to participate in and cooperate fully with the work of the Special Committee in order to implement the provisions of Article 73 *e* of the Charter and the Declaration and in order to advise the Committee on the implementation of the provisions under Article 73 *b* of the Charter on efforts to promote self-government in Bermuda, and encourages the administering Power to facilitate visiting and special missions to the Territory;

10. *Reaffirms* the responsibility of the administering Power under the Charter to promote the economic and social development and to preserve the cultural identity of the Territory, and requests the administering Power to take steps to enlist and make effective use of all possible assistance, on both a bilateral and a multilateral basis, in the strengthening of the economies of the Territory;

11. *Takes into account* the 2030 Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals,[7] stresses the importance of fostering the economic and social sustainable development of the Territory by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing

[7] Resolution 70/1.

inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion and promoting the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supports, inter alia, economic, social and human development, while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration, restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges, and strongly urges the administering Power to refrain from undertaking any kind of illicit, harmful and unproductive activities, including the use of the Territory as a tax haven, that are not aligned with the interest of the people of the Territory;

12. *Requests* the Territory and the administering Power to take all measures necessary to protect and conserve the environment of the Territory against any degradation, and once again requests the specialized agencies concerned to monitor environmental conditions in the Territory and to provide assistance to the Territory, consistent with their prevailing rules of procedure;

13. *Requests* the Special Committee to continue to examine the question of Bermuda and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and on the implementation of the present resolution.